Health and Homeland Alert Network – Alert Level License Training

The Health and Homeland Alert Network (HHAN) provides secure web-based communication and information sharing capabilities to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.   The three core functionalities are:

· Semi-automated alerting compatible with telephones, email, fax, and pagers
· Web-based collaboration on documents and other files
· Statewide directory of key personnel organized by role

The HHAN uses a browser-based application called the BioTerrorism Readiness Suite (BTRS).   You need a PC with a minimum of Windows 98 and Internet Explorer 5.5, both with all required service packs, in order to use the HHAN.

The state government and all 351 of the Commonwealth's cities and towns use the HHAN in support of bioterroism preparedness.   This can include, but is not limited to, emergency alerts, response planning, educational services, disease surveillance, laboratory reporting, and epidemiologic investigation.

As a priority, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) plans to make sure that each municipality has at least one person trained from each of the following agencies:

· Public Health
· Emergency Management
· Community Health Centers
· Fire Services
· Emergency Medical Services
· Hospitals
· Police

The HAN is paid for in part by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Center for Disease Control (CDC).

 Please feel free to direct any questions to Alert.Network@state.ma.us

What is the alerting system?

This alerting system is used as a tool to notify Commonwealth entities of bioterrorism, health and public safety issues, outages, and other infrastructure- related incidents.   An alert may be sent to the selected recipients' email address, text pager, telephone and/or fax.   In addition, all alerts received will be available on the HHAN's home page when you login.

Alerts are sent to Role Groups, individuals grouped together logically by role or job function to allow for easier distribution of alert messages to HHAN users.

Your contact information is one of the most vital components of the system; therefore, its accuracy is crucial.   To ensure that your information is correct and up to date, the system will prompt you to review your contact information every 30 days.

Accessing the System

The HHAN is a secure environment requiring users to have validated user IDs and passwords.   Only a HHAN administrator can establish system user accounts. Usernames are typically a person's first initial followed immediately by their last name. For example:
 The user named John Jackson would have a login ID of jjackson.
 If you have a common name, a combination of your first initial and last name already may be in use.   In that case, your HHAN administrator will create a unique username for you.
The default password for your first login is simply the word "password".   One of your first actions in the system will be to setup your user profile, which includes changing your password to something unique.   Once you establish a new password for yourself, it will not change, unless you decide to change it yourself at some point in the future.

It is important to know that passwords:

- Must have a minimum of 6 strokes
- Are case sensitive
- Will never expire
- Do not need any special characters

As we previously mentioned, the HHAN is a browser-based application.   This means you will be able to pick up your alerts at your main office, at remote offices, at home, at the local library, at an Internet café, or where ever you find a PC connected to the Internet.
To access the system, you will need to launch Internet Explorer version 5.5 or higher and direct your browser to the web address:

www.mass.gov/alertnetwork

 Let's take at look at the process for logging into the system…

1. Start by launching Internet Explorer
2. Click to highlight the contents of the address bar
3. Type the address www.mass.gov/alertnetwork and then click the GO button

The alert network is a secure site. You will be prompted to enter your username and password. Remember that your username is usually the first initial of your first name followed immediately by your last name. Please contact a HHAN administrator, at the previously given e-mail ddress, if you are unsure of your username. The first time you login your password will be the word password. You will change this once you are logged in. We'll cover how to do this later in the course. If your password does not work,

please contact a HHAN administrator. Click the OK button and you will see the splash screen for the HHAN. Then, the homepage of the HHAN will appear and you are logged in to the system.

The Home Page

After you type your user name and password, you will be brought to the HHAN's Home Page.   This portal is composed of multiple pages, also called dashboards, each of which provides users with access to content and functions.   The primary dashboard is **Home**, where all users will enter the site upon successful login.

NOTE: The first time you log into the HHAN you will be brought to the My Profile section of the network.   Once you establish your profile, the next time you log in you will begin at the home page.

Along the top of the screen you will see the "menu bar", which is the set of navigation buttons that link to other parts of the HHAN.

The Quick Links section displays links to other information, resources, and websites that may be of interest to users.

The News and Announcements sections, display general items of interest and various announcements for all users to access.

The Active Alerts section displays information on alerts that have been sent to a role of which you are a member.

On the menu bar along the top of the screen, click on My Profile.

My Profile

The profile dashboard will appear. This is where all your contact information is stored and kept current.

Click Change My Profile on the left hand side of the screen to change or update your profile information. Fill in or edit information in the appropriate fields, as needed. Use the scroll bar on the right side of the screen to move and view all of the profile fields. Make sure to scroll through the entire profile and fill in as much of your contact information as possible. Keep in mind that your home contact info is not viewable by regular users, only administrators. To complete the profile, use the scroll bar to navigate to the bottom of the page and click on the Save button. On the next screen, click the OK button. You will receive an email at your work e-mail address, informing you that your profile has been successfully updated. Remember that you can always update your profile information by following the preceding steps.

Changing Your Alerting Security Code

Next, we'll learn how to change your alerting security code. The Alerting Security Code is a 4-digit number you will be required to provide when receiving an alert via the

telephone.
It is a computer that will make the phone call to you when an alert is sent via the phone. Consequently, we will need a way to verify that you are the one on the other end of the receiver. We verify ourselves to the system by keying in our 4-digit code when prompted. You can change your security code whenever you wish using the steps you will learn now...

Click Change My Alerting Security Code on the left hand side of the screen. Click in the text box that appears on the next screen, and type in your desired four-digit code. Click in the second box just below it, and verify that this is the code you'd like by re-entering your code. Click the Save button. Click the OK button on the next screen. Now that you've established your Alerting Security Code you will be able to receive alerts via the telephone.

Creating Your Alerting Profile

Next, we'll learn how to create alerting profiles.

Your Alerting Profile is your way of telling the system the manner in which you wish to be alerted in the event of high, medium and low priority alerts.   You indicate if you prefer telephone contact versus email or other methods.   The system will use the phone numbers, email addresses and other contact information provided in the **My Profile** fields.
You can create multiple Alerting Profiles that you may wish to activate at different times.   For instance, perhaps you want different contact methods on the weekend.   In that case, you would need to activate your "Weekend" Alerting Profile before you leave work on Friday.

Let's see what's involved in the process…

Click Change My Alerting Profile on the left hand side of the screen. Then click on the New button. Click in the Profile Name field. You must name your profile in order to differentiate it from another profile, if you choose to have multiple profiles. You may name them anything you wish. Click the Activate check box. This will immediately put your new profile into use. Now you must select the communication methods you prefer for each of the three levels of alerts you may receive: high priority, medium priority, and low priority. Click the drop down arrow for high priority. You will see a list of available contact methods. You can select as many of the locations as you'd like, up to five maximum. For a high priority alert, it is recommended that you select at least one phone as an option. Then repeat this process for medium and low priority alerts. We also recommend that you NOT select a phone as a means of notification on a low level alert. These are generally FYI type of alerts and will not require any action on your part. When finished, scroll down to the bottom of the screen and click on the Save button. Your profile is now active and the locations you have selected will begin receiving alerts as they are sent. If you want to create multiple profiles, just follow the preceding steps to create new profiles.

Changing Your Password

Next, let's learn how to change your password. As mentioned earlier, your initial password will be simply the word "password." You will want immediately to change this to something unique and more secure.

Passwords must have a minimum of 6 strokes, are case sensitive, will never expire, and do not need any special characters.

If you ever forget your password, you will need to contact a HHAN administrator to have them reset it for you. You cannot log into the system without a valid password.

Click Change My Password on the left hand side of the screen. On the next screen, click in the Current Password box. Your current password will be whatever you used to login to the HHAN on that occasion. Remember, if it is your first time logging in, your password will be the word password. Click in the New Password box. You may now enter what you would like your new password to be. Next, click in the Verify New Password box and enter your new password again. Remember, your new password must be a minimum of six characters in length. Do not share your password with others or leave it written down near your computer. Your password will not expire, but if you forget it you will need to contact a HHAN administrator at alert.network@state.ma.us in order to have it reset. Click the Save button. Click OK to confirm your action. You will then be prompted to log back into the HHAN, using your new password.

The Role Directory

The directory is the organizational structure of all users in the network. The directory is structured into organizational units. Roughly, an organizational unit equates to an agency or department within an agency. Inside organizational units you will find further sub-groups of organizational units and alerting roles. Alerting roles are groups of individual users who have the same job function or responsibility in the event of an emergency. In this lesson we will review the directory structure and we will learn how to search the directory to locate a specific individual.

From the HHAN home page, click on the Directory tab in the menu bar. Use the Role Directory list at the left to locate specific organizational units and the alerting roles found within them. There are many branches on the Role Directory; however, you will primarily be concerned with the organizational units and alerting roles found under State – MA. After expanding the tree you will now see all of the agencies listed under the state of Massachusetts. As you can see, you may need to increase the space available for the Role Directory as you begin to expand it. This can be done by dragging the vertical line separating the right and left hand sides of the screen. Let's expand an organizational unit and take a look at the roles within it. Click the plus symbol before an agency name to expand it. The items listed in bold are further organizational units within an agency. The entries in plain text are the alerting roles. In order to find out who is in a particular role, and contact info for those people, left click on the role itself. The right hand side of the screen will change to show you the members of that role. The number at the top lists the total number of users in that role. You can use the scroll bar on the right hand side to scroll down and see all of the members of the role. There is more information to be found for each member of the role. Remember, you can adjust the size of each screen by

clicking and dragging the vertical line which separates the two sides of the screen. You can look at as many roles as you'd like, or return to the home page by clicking Home on the menu bar.

Another feature of the Role Directory is the ability to search for users. On the main page of the Role Directory, click the Search tab found just above the Directory tree itself. The most common and easy way to search for a particular user is to search by name. This option will be pre-selected for you in the drop down box titled "field". You can search for a user by first name, last name, or both. Click the text field and type in the name of the user you would like to find. Then click the Search button. The results of your search will be displayed on the right hand side of the screen. Remember that you can resize the sections of the screen as you need to. You can search for users in multiple ways. By clicking the drop down box next to the "field" space, you can search not only by name, but by Title, Organization, Business Category, Professional License, Specialty, Spoken Languages, Work Location, and Work City.

Viewing Received Alerts

Recipients of alerts can receive telephone calls, faxes, emails, and text messages on their pagers, which include the alert subject and message.   They may also view the alert through the portal in the **Active Alerts** section on the **Home** page. Your Active Alerts will always be visible underneath that section on the home page. To view the message body of the alert, click on the time and date stamp next to the alert. An Alert Details screen will appear showing you the date and time sent, who the alert is from, the message body and the date and time that the alert will expire and no longer be available in your Active Alerts list. After reading the message it is important that confirm receipt. This will allow the sender to know you have received the information. To confirm, click on the Confirm Receipt button. Once you click that link, it will disappear, letting you know that you have successfully confirmed. To return to the home page, click the Back to Previous View link.

Confirming Receipt of an Alert via Email

If you receive an alert in your email inbox and you have not already viewed and confirmed it on the home page, it is important to do so now. Open the email as you would any other to read the message. To confirm receipt of the alert, click the link "click to confirm receipt of this message". An Internet Explorer window will open and prompt you to login to the HHAN. Use the username and password that you use to access the HHAN. At this point the alert has been confirmed and you may exit the window and return to your email inbox. Or, if you want to go to the HHAN homepage you can click the link "BTRS Portal home page".

Confirming a Telephone Alert

Alerts can be received and confirmed via telephone.   Upon answering an alert call, a computer recording will state you have a message from the Alert Network and will request you press any key on your touch-tone phone to continue.

You will then be asked to enter your 4-digit **Alerting Security Code**. Remember that your Alerting Security Code is NOT the password you use to login to the home page, or confirm receipt through an email link. It is the four-digit numerical code that you created

when setting up your profile. After you enter your **Alerting Security Code**, the alert will be read to you. You will be asked to press "one" on your touch-tone phone to confirm receipt of the alert or "two" to replay the message.
Be sure to press "one" to confirm receipt of your alert back to the sender.

Q. What if you receive a voice mail stating that you have an important message from the Massachusetts Alert Network?

A. If you receive this message, your voice mail has captured the computerized voice of the HHAN trying to reach you. Since you are listening to a message, you will not be able to press any key to continue, or enter your Alerting Security Code. You will need to login to the HHAN and view the alert through the portal. It will be located under the Active Alerts section on the home page. *There is no way to retrieve the message from your voicemail nor is there a phone number to call to pick up your messages. The pick up point for missed messages is the portal home page.*

Logging off the HHAN

It is very important that you close out of the BTRS portal by logging off properly.   To do this, you'll use the **Logoff** link in the navigation bar. Click the Logoff button found in the menu bar along the top of the screen. You will come to a page telling you that you must close all open browser windows to truly logoff the HHAN. If you have other browser windows open, please remember to close them as well when you are finished.

You have now completed the Health and Homeland Alert Network alert level license training. Please contact the email address below with any questions about this course, or the HHAN in general. Thank you!

Alert.network@state.ma.us